



ERIC WHITACRE'S  
**VIRTUAL SCHOOL**

## CHAPTER 1: A SNAKE WEARING PANTS

*Getting Color on the Blank Page*

Student Guide – Curiosity Edition



### Introduction

This video will help you gain some insight into Eric's approach for starting a creative project or idea. You will explore some ways that you can begin to visualize a new project or creative idea using the "snake wearing pants" Style Sheet method.

Works referenced in this video:

- *Equus*: <https://youtu.be/EiiJxpJuCsA>
- *A Boy and a Girl*: [https://youtu.be/j\\_AMl0vRqF8](https://youtu.be/j_AMl0vRqF8)
- *When David Heard*: <https://youtu.be/AwFACXDoOiY>

## Words and ideas to help you stay curious

“Snake wearing pants”

Style Sheet

*Equus*

“Free from the tyranny of detail”

## Discussion, Discovery and Insight

Why do you think starting a new project can be terrifying, especially when you are staring at a blank screen or piece of paper?

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Why is filling the paper with color and getting a project going a good idea? When have you done this with a project or idea?

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The great artist Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) is quoted as saying: “All children are born artists, the problem is to remain an artist as we grow up.” What do you think Picasso means by this? How does this relate to you as a curious learner?

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Are you comfortable searching for an answer to a question that has more than one right answer?

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What does it mean to be a creative person? Do you consider yourself to be a creative person? Why or why not?

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## Create a Style Sheet

1. You don't need to be a composer to explore the creative process. Get a big piece of blank paper and a pencil, pen or colored markers to create your own Style Sheet.
2. Brainstorm ideas or concepts that inspire you or that you would like to explore.
3. Choose an idea or concept from your brainstorm. Write the word or draw a picture representing the word. (Don't worry if you can't think of anything right away.)
4. If you wrote a word, add a simple picture that goes with the word. If you drew a picture, write the word that you think goes with the picture.
5. Pause and think about your idea. Add new or related ideas, words or pictures that come into your mind in any creative way you would like. Use colors, shapes, words or anything that inspires you. As Eric says, "just move" through the process. Fill up the page with your ideas. Don't judge your work, but let it be what it will be.
6. After you have filled the page with even more words, images, colors, and ideas, pause again and just observe what you have created. Be silent. Look. Clear your mind. Do these ideas and images make sense together, or do you need more to express your idea? Add anything that you're inspired to add. Decide when it feels completed for the time being. Let your intuition guide you and see if you can feel when it's done.
7. Share your Style Sheet with someone else and see if they can get a feel for what you have created. Let them ask you questions. Explain how you thought of what to draw and write. Help them understand why you are interested in the subject, and how you decided to include the elements that you did into the Style Sheet. Don't let anyone tell you you did it wrong if you feel you did it creatively. Try to be "free from a sense of judgment" if possible.
8. On a different day, look again at the Style Sheet and just let it speak to your intuitive senses. Does it inspire you to think about the subject in a way that pleases or intrigues you in some way? Do you feel closer to the idea because of the time you spent thinking and creating? Explain your thoughts and opinions.

## Reflection and Insights

Did you find the Style Sheet exercise easy or hard for you? Was it fun or challenging? Explain your answers.

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Did this process make you more curious or less curious about the topic you explored, or was there no change? Why, or why not?

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Would you do this process again for another topic or idea? Explain your thinking.

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Does the process of being creative through the Style Sheet activity inspire you to pursue anything further? Describe your ideas or explain your final thoughts about the process, and what you may have learned by doing it.

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Would you change this activity to better suit your learning style and interests? If so, describe how you would change it and why the adjustments would be better for you.

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